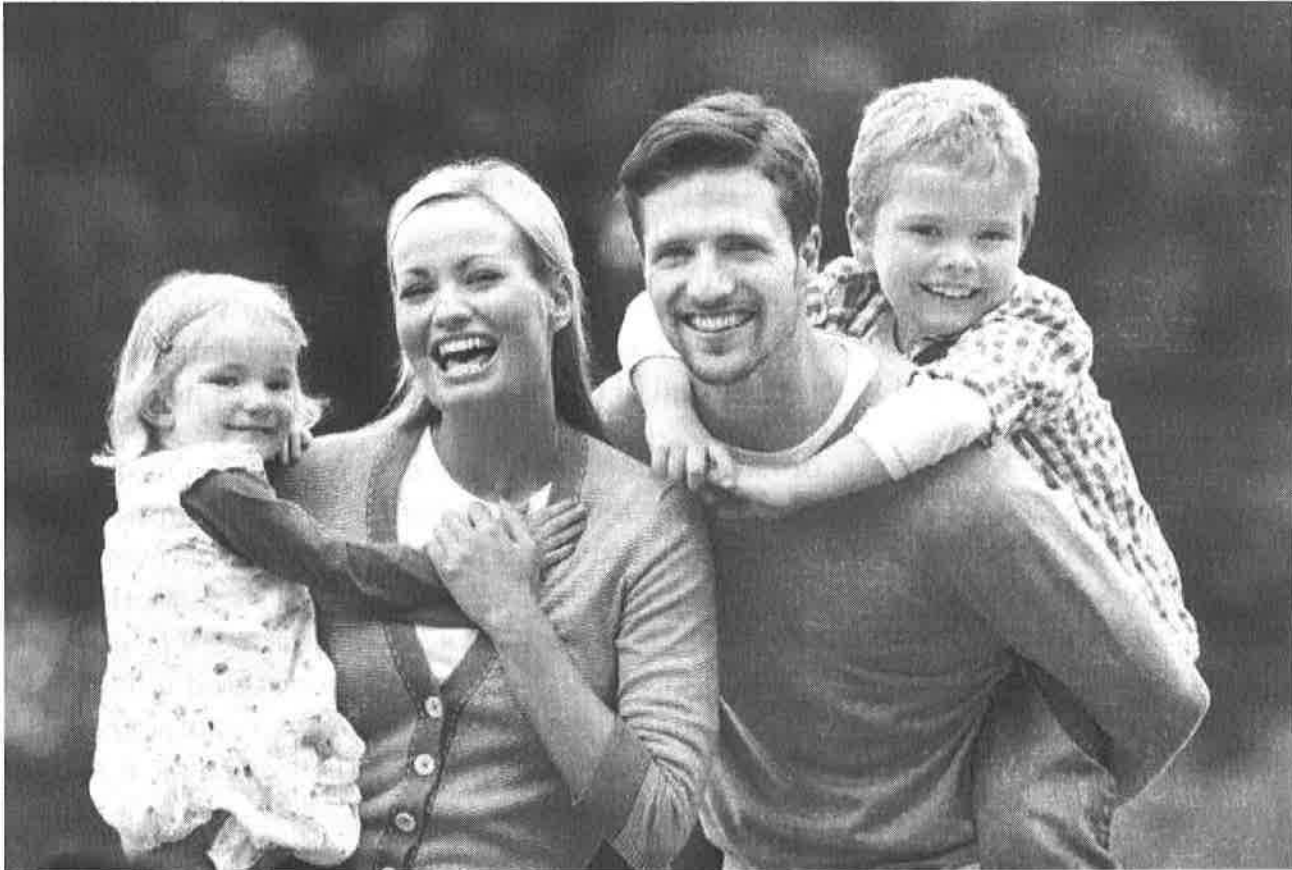




# Protect the Family, Save America



One of the great joys and blessings of being an authoritative leader in the Church is the opportunity I often have to help correct some of the misunderstandings that members have regarding our doctrines. While I cannot speak for the Church outside of Conference, I can do my best to try to shed some light on important subjects as they arise. A few days ago, I spoke at a youth devotional regarding the importance of the family. I entitled my remarks "Protect the Family, Save America":

My dearest youth, I was recently asked by some of our precious members at a Stake Youth Conference whether or not we as Latter-days Saints believe in plural marriage. Some of them said they had read online that we still practice it in a roundabout way, and others said they had read that the fall of the Roman empire was related to the prohibition of plural marriages. I therefore decided to address this important subject and clear up these innocent and youthful misunderstandings.

First, I must state that the Church absolutely does not sanction the practice of plural marriage currently on earth. (Now, precious youth, notice I said the words "on earth." This will be important later, as you will see.) We cannot and should not engage in the practice of plural marriage during mortality, for it is contrary to the laws of the land.

Next, in order for us to correctly know why the Roman empire fell, we would be well-advised to consult the inspired words of our prophets, seers, and revelators, rather than the ever-changing theories of historians and scientists. From their inspired prophetic words, it is clear that the fall of the Roman empire was directly related to its family structure. From the Prophet Brigham Young, we learn:

“Since the founding of the Roman empire, monogamy has prevailed more extensively than in times previous to that. The founders of that ancient empire ... made laws favoring monogamy ... and hence this monogamic system which now prevails throughout all Christendom, and which has been so fruitful *a source of prostitution and whoredom* throughout all the Christian monogamic cities of the Old and New World, until *rottenness and decay* are at the root of their institutions both national and religious.” (Journal of Discourses, 11:128)

Do you see what the Prophet is saying, dearest youth? The definition of monogamy is “the practice or state of being married to one person.” We know from modern-day revelation that it was this uninspired practice which led to the downfall of the greatest civilization of its time!

President Young also taught: “Monogamy, or *restrictions by law to one wife, is no part of the economy of heaven among men*. Such a system was commenced by the founders of the Roman Empire. ... Rome became the mistress of the world, and introduced this order of monogamy wherever her sway was acknowledged. Thus this monogamic order of marriage, so esteemed by modern Christians as a hold sacrament and divine institution, is *nothing but a system established by a set of robbers*. Why do we believe in and practice polygamy? Because the Lord introduced it to His servants in a revelation given to Joseph Smith, and the Lord’s servants have always practiced it. And is that religion popular in heaven? *It is the only popular religion there.*” (Deseret News, 6 August 1862)

And Apostle George Q. Cannon added: “Rome, with her arts, sciences and warlike instincts, was once the mistress of the world; but her glory faded. She was a monogamic nation, and *the numerous evils attending that system early laid the foundation for that ruin which eventually overtook her.*” (Journal of Discourses, 13:202)

What, then, caused the fall of the Roman empire? Monogamy. From the revealed word of the Lord, we know with a surety that it was monogamy that led to the “rottenness and decay” and eventual fall of the Roman empire.

So, if plural marriage is indeed the heavenly order of marriage, why do we not practice it today? In instances such as these, I like to look to the current Brethren for an example. Let us consider our righteous prophet, seer, and revelator, Elder Russell M. Nelson. He first married his beloved companion, Dantzel, in the temple and was sealed to her for all eternity. Then, tragically, Dantzel passed away unexpectedly in their home when Elder Nelson was only around 81 years old. Therefore, shortly thereafter, Elder Nelson was sealed to a beautiful and charming woman named Wendy Lee Watson in an eternal temple marriage. (Because Wendy Watson was 55 years old at the time, she was unlikely to have married in this life, and thus Elder Nelson did this good woman a great service by giving her the opportunity to marry an Apostle of the Lord.) Thus we see that Elder Nelson is now sealed eternally to *two* women, and in the heavens he shall have both at once! How glorious are the promises of the Lord!

After explaining this to the youth, they asked me: "Has Elder Nelson displeased the Lord by being eternally sealed to two women at once?" Certainly not. Were it wrong in the eyes of God, Elder Nelson would not have done so. One youth was "quick to observe" that Elder Nelson's second wife was younger than his own daughters. I answered that this was perfectly acceptable, and that we must ever remember that the prophets, seers, and revelators of the Lord always act under divine inspiration, according to eternal laws that do not change with the trends of society. As Elder Nelson has boldly testified: "Regardless of what civil legislation may be enacted, the doctrine of the Lord regarding marriage and morality *cannot be changed*. Remember: sin, even if legalized by man, is still sin in the eyes of God! ... We cannot change His doctrine. It is not ours to change." (see <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/10/decisions-for-eternity?lang=eng> (<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/10/decisions-for-eternity?lang=eng>))

This *sin* mentioned by Elder Nelson, of course, applies to the sin of rejecting the practice of plural marriage. I reassured our precious youth that this divine practice is reiterated in our holy scriptures. Section 132 of the Doctrine & Covenants refers to plural marriage as "the new and everlasting covenant." In verse 4, we read: "For behold, I reveal unto you *a new and an everlasting covenant* [plural marriage]; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye *damned*; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory." (As I read this verse, I perceived that the youth were greatly uplifted by this modern revelation.)

My dearest young men and young women, Elder Nelson is righteously abiding by the "laws of the land" whilst at the same time abiding by the new and everlasting covenant. Even though we must obey the laws of the land, let us remember that the new and everlasting covenant of marriage is of God and *cannot be changed*. (The young women in attendance seemed especially comforted by this fact.) Let us follow the example of our righteous prophets, seers, and revelators. We have the blessed assurance that we shall one day again practice the new and everlasting covenant when we have passed through this life and have entered the unspeakable wonder and bliss of the Celestial Kingdom of our God. On that glorious day, the corrupt practice of worldly marriages will be abolished and the true and everlasting covenant will reign supreme.

O youth of the noble birthright! May the Lord bless each of you as you "look forward with an eye of faith" to that heavenly day when the family will be restored to its true order as we live again in the presence of our Father in Heaven with our beloved wives and children.